



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

FARM LABOR



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1222 Woodward St. • Orlando, FL 32803
(407) 648-6013 • (407) 648-6029 FAX • www.nass.usda.gov/fl

August 18, 2008

FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 44,000 for the week of July 6 through 12. Farmers hired 42,000 workers compared with 51,000 in April 2008. Agricultural services provided 2,000 paid workers, down 6,000 from last quarter.

Warm, humid conditions welcomed the survey week. Scattered thunderstorms brought various amounts of rainfall. Vegetable growers reported a preliminary 5.1 million pounds of vegetables and non-citrus fruits during the survey week, down from the preliminary 162.5 million in April 2008. Citrus growers were focused on grove maintenance, scheduled management practices, canker and psyllid control. There were no citrus shipments during the survey week.

The July combined farmers and agricultural all hired worker wage rate average was \$9.90 per hour, 32 cents less than the \$10.22 paid last quarter. Farmers paid an average of \$9.90 per hour, 35 cents lower than the \$10.25 paid in the previous quarter. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$9.85 per hour, 20 cents lower than the \$10.05 paid in April 2008.

UNITED STATES

Hired Workers Down 3 Percent, Wage Rates up 4 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 1,173,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 6-12, 2008, down 3 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 828,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 345,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.34 per hour during the July 2008 reference week, up 35 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$9.66 per hour, up 42 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned \$9.98 per hour compared with \$9.73 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$9.74 per hour, was up 37 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 40.5 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 2 percent from a year ago. The largest decreases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in California and in the Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), and Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) regions. In California, lack of available irrigation water caused much acreage to be left fallow. Planted acreage of cotton, dry beans, and sugar beets declined sharply from 2007. Therefore, the demand for field workers was considerably lower. Rain and wet conditions in the Lake and Corn Belt I regions severely hampered most field activities and lessened the need for field workers. In the Appalachian I and II regions, wet conditions compared with the previous year's drier reference week reduced the demand for field workers. Lower cattle inventories in both regions led to fewer livestock workers being needed.

The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming), and Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah) regions. Increased acreage of cherries, berries, and grapes in the Pacific region heightened the demand for hired workers. In the Delta region, a drier reference week compared with last year caused more field workers to be hired, and larger cattle and hog inventories increased the demand for livestock workers. Strong demand from the nursery and greenhouse industry in the Southeast region kept worker numbers above the previous year. In the Mountain I region, more acreage planted to field crops led to a greater demand for field workers. Dry conditions caused pastures to deteriorate which required more cattle to be moved and increased the need for livestock workers. Harvests of wheat and hay in the Mountain II region were peaking during the reference week, and vegetable harvest was accelerating. Therefore, more field workers were required.

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Appalachian II, Mountain II, Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), Delta, and Mountain I regions. In the Appalachian II and Mountain II regions, the higher wages were due to a larger proportion of nursery and greenhouse workers. Also, a larger percentage of equine workers in the Appalachian II region contributed to the increase. Salaried workers in the Mountain III region were putting in fewer hours, due to unusually wet conditions, which caused the average wage to be higher. In the Delta and Mountain I regions, the higher wages were due to a lower percentage of part time workers.

TABLE 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, July 6 through 12, 2008, with comparisons

Employer, Year, and Survey Week		Hired Workers						
		Number of Workers			Hours Worked Per Week	Wages Paid by Type of Work		
		All	Expected to work			All	Field	Livestock
			150 days or more	149 days or less				
		Thousands			Hours	Dollars Per Hour ^{2/}		
HIRED BY FARMERS ^{1/}								
2008	July 6 - 12	42.0	39.0	3.0	40.9	9.90	8.84	9.25
	April 6 - 12	51.0	45.0	6.0	41.5	10.25	9.32	9.59
	January 6 - 12	49.0	45.0	4.0	41.8	9.98	9.00	9.20
2007	October 7 - 13	43.0	39.0	4.0	41.8	9.76	8.70	8.95
	July 8 - 14	41.0	39.0	2.0	41.0	9.49	8.50	8.60
	April 8 - 14	55.0	46.0	9.0	39.2	10.01	9.20	9.00
	January 7 – 13 ^{3/}							
2006	October 8 - 14	44.0	40.0	4.0	41.1	9.42	8.50	9.10
	July 9 - 15	43.0	38.0	5.0	41.0	9.40	8.39	9.10
	April 9 - 15	52.0	44.0	8.0	40.4	9.19	8.37	8.50
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2008	July 6 - 12	2.0			43.0	9.85		
	April 6 - 12	8.0			40.0	10.05		
	January 6 - 12	9.0			41.0	9.90		
2007	October 7 - 13	4.0			42.0	9.55		
	July 8 - 14	2.0			43.0	9.60		
	April 8 - 14	8.0			40.0	10.45		
	January 7 – 13 ^{3/}							
2006	October 8- 14	5.0			42.0	9.90		
	July 9 – 15	3.0			45.0	9.50		
	April 9 – 15	8.0			40.0	9.60		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2008	July 6 - 12	44.0				9.90		
	April 6 - 12	59.0				10.22		
	January 6 - 12	58.0				9.97		
2007	October 7 - 13	47.0				9.74		
	July 8 - 14	43.0				9.50		
	April 8 – 14	63.0				10.07		
	January 7 – 13 ^{3/}							
2006	October 8 – 14	49.0				9.47		
	July 9 – 15	46.0				9.41		
	April 9 – 15	60.0				9.24		

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Services workers.

^{2/} Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

^{3/} The January Farm Labor Survey was not conducted.

**TABLE 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked,
Selected States, July 6 through 12, 2008, with comparisons ^{1/}**

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States ^{2/}
	<i>Thousands</i>					
ALL HIRED WORKERS						
July 6 – 12, 2008	42	160	57	20	6	828
April 6 – 12, 2008	51	156	45	17	6	700
July 8 -14, 2007	41	188	58	22	6	843
EXPECTED TO WORK						
150 days or more						
July 6 – 12, 2008	39	127	43	17	5	585
April 6 – 12, 2008	45	135	35	16	5	563
July 8 -14, 2007	39	151	43	19	5	596
149 days or less						
July 6 – 12, 2008	3	33	14	3	1	243
April 6 – 12, 2008	6	21	10	1	1	137
July 8 -14, 2007	2	37	15	3	1	247
	<i>Average hours per week</i>					
HOURS WORKED BY ALL HIRED WORKERS						
July 6 – 12, 2008	40.9	45.5	39.0	42.0	37.0	40.5
April 6 – 12, 2008	41.5	*43.7	42.1	43.6	38.5	*40.8
July 8 -14, 2007	41.0	46.9	41.0	45.0	39.0	41.4
	<i>Dollars per hour ^{3/}</i>					
WAGES BY TYPE OF WORKER						
Field						
July 6 – 12, 2008	8.84	9.85	8.60	9.21	11.10	9.66
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.32	10.00	8.51	9.38	10.80	9.65
July 8 -14, 2007	8.50	9.60	8.14	8.34	10.70	9.24
Livestock						
July 6 – 12, 2008	9.25	11.00	10.12	11.44	^{4/}	9.98
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.59	*11.00	9.74	10.69	^{4/}	*10.24
July 8 -14, 2007	8.60	10.60	9.67	9.65	^{4/}	9.73
Field & Livestock Combined						
July 6 – 12, 2008	8.90	10.00	9.20	9.85	11.21	9.74
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.35	*10.16	9.05	9.97	10.91	*9.84
July 8 -14, 2007	8.51	9.72	8.85	8.80	10.89	9.37
ALL HIRED WORKER WAGE RATE						
July 6 – 12, 2008	9.90	10.74	9.80	10.55	13.33	10.34
April 6 – 12, 2008	10.25	*11.05	9.72	10.55	13.28	*10.57
July 8 -14, 2007	9.49	10.32	9.18	9.47	12.87	9.99

* Revised

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Service workers.

^{2/} United States exclude Alaska.

^{3/} Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

^{4/} Insufficient data for livestock.

Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

SURVEY PROCEDURES: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of July using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected. Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from an area sampling frame. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was July 6-12, 2008.

RELIABILITY: Two types of errors, sampling and non-sampling, are always present in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "accuracy" of the estimates. Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers at the U.S. level is normally less than 5 percent. The relative sampling error for the number of hired workers generally ranged between 8 and 20 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 0.8 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.8 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 5 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm generally ranged between 2 and 17 percent at the regional level. Non-sampling errors can occur in a complete census as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in editing, coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize non-sampling errors.

REVISION POLICY: Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for April 2008 and July 2007 were subject to revision with this report. If any revisions were made to previous data, they are reprinted in this report for your information, and they are identified as such.